



City of Hartford

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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PRECAUTIONS AGAINST WEST NILE VIRUS STILL NEEDED

Avoid Mosquito Bites to Avoid Infection

HARTFORD, CT : Don't lower the guard! The mosquitoes' season is not over yet. This is the time of year for peak risk exposure to West Nile Virus (WNV) infected mosquitoes. Surveillance data indicate that WNV is building up in Connecticut. According to a press release from the State Department of Public Health, positive activity for West Nile Virus has been recently detected in the town of Mildford, CT. "We expect that West Nile and eastern equine encephalitis viruses will continue to be identified in Connecticut through September and October" Said DPH Commissioner, Dr. Robert Galvin.

It is important for residents to be aware of the risk of WNV infection and to recognize the importance of taking recommended personal protection precautions to avoid mosquito bites and of taking measures to reduce mosquito-breeding areas near their homes. Until we have a consistent cold weather pattern, especially after a first frost, we are still in the high-risk season for WNV exposure.

West Nile Virus (WNV) activity is occurring in many parts of the country. Human illness from WNV is rare, even in areas where the virus has been reported. The chance that any one person is going to become ill from a mosquito bite is low. Nevertheless, it is time to start taking personal protection precautions and eliminating mosquito-breeding sites in order to protect yourself, your family and your community from West Nile virus. Three ways you can reduce your West Nile Virus risk:

1. Avoid Mosquito Bites!

- **Apply Insect Repellent Containing DEET** to exposed skin when you go outdoors. Even a short time sitting outdoors can be long enough to get a mosquito bite.

- **Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites.** When possible, wear long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors. Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with repellent containing permethrin or DEET will give extra protection. Don't apply repellents containing permethrin directly to skin. Do not spray repellent containing DEET on the skin under your clothing.

- **Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours.** The hours from dusk to dawn are peak mosquito biting times. Consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times or take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing during evening and early morning.

2. Mosquito-Proof Your Home

- **Drain Standing Water:** Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by getting rid of items that hold water such as ceramic pots, used tires, tire swings.

- **Install or Repair Screens.** Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having well-fitting screens on both windows and doors. Offer to help neighbors whose screens might be in bad shape.

3. Help Your Community

- **Clean Up.** Mosquito breeding sites can be everywhere. Neighborhood clean up days can be organized by civic or youth organizations to pick up containers from vacant lots, parks and to encourage people to keep their yards free of standing water. Mosquitoes don't care about fences, so breeding sites anywhere in the neighborhood are important.

- **Report Dead Birds to Local Health Department.** Dead birds may be a sign that West Nile virus is circulating between birds and the mosquitoes in an area. Over 110 species of birds are known to have been infected with West Nile virus, though not all infected birds will die. By reporting dead birds to your local health department, the public plays an important role in monitoring West Nile virus. To report dead bird(s), please call the Hartford Health and Human Services Department at **(860) 543-8815**. The information we will be interested in includes: date of the dead bird sighting; kind of bird(s); number of birds; and where the bird(s) was seen.

- **Mosquito Control Program.** As part of the statewide mosquito management program, the city of Hartford Health and Human Services Department works with the State Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Public Health to monitor and manage the city's mosquito population levels to reduce the potential public health threat of mosquito-borne diseases. **Following new protocols established by the Health & Human Services Department, again this year, over 8,000 Hartford storm drains were treated with larvicide to control larval mosquitoes in aquatic habitats.** Larviciding is the most efficient and effective method of managing mosquitoes because larvae are concentrated in relatively small, well-defined, aquatic habitats. It is safe to the environment and does not pose any adverse threat when used in accordance with the label.

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Public Health at (860) 509-77994; or Michele Sullivan, State Department of
Environmental Protection at (860) 424-4100.

Resources for Additional Information:

The Hartford Health and Human Services Department at (860) 543-8800

The Department of Public Health, Epidemiology Program at (860) 509-7994

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Website at <http://www.caes.state.ct.us>

The Department of Environmental Protection Website at <http://dep.state.ct.us>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website at <http://www.cdc.gov>

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